

NOTES OF THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
FOR TOWN OF NEW LEBANON  
HELD ON April 4, 2022 VIA TELECONFERENCE

Present: Steve Abramson, Anna Duhon, Deb Gordon Tistrya Houghtling (acting chair), Ellen Ann Kafkalas, Peg Munves, Sharon Powers, Erminia Rasmussen Josh Young

Absent: Danielle Kuffel, Jack Lancto, Monte Wasch

Members of the Public: Marianna Anthonisen, Britt Buckenroth, Bob Gilson, Nina Keller

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm by Tistrya Houghtling who was serving as chair in Monte's absence

**MSC:** to approve the minutes of the March meeting was made by Ellen Ann Kafkalas and seconded by Erminia Rasmussen. Tistrya Houghtling abstained because she was not in attendance at that meeting. Motion approved.

**DISCUSSION:**

Centered around the action item list from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update. There are four actions for the BEDC that need to be tackled and we should figure out who will be working on each:

1. BEDC will expand the town website and do an event calendar and a separate visitnewlebanon.com web page. Sharon Powers is already working on this

**MSC:** to task the Outreach & Marketing subcommittee on expanding the website and maintaining an event calendar was made by Tistrya Houghtling, seconded by Ellen Ann Kafkalas. Motion carried.

2. On page 74 of the Comp Plan, it asked the BEDC to conduct a needs analysis, or cost benefit analysis regarding whether or not a water and sewer system would benefit the town and if there would be buy-in from the businesses. This is due June of 2023 and the BEDC infrastructure committee should handle it

**MSC:** to have the Infrastructure subcommittee handle the informal needs/cost benefit analysis, a preliminary step before a feasibility study would be paid for and carried out, to see if that expense is warranted. Tistrya Houghtling made the motion, Sharon Powers seconded it. Motion carried.

3. On page 73 of the Comp Plan – The Town Board will direct the BEDC to explore the idea of forming a Local Development Corporation (LDC) and see what it can do for us and what it may cost – this is due June of 2023. Monte Wasch had wanted to take the lead on this and perhaps an exploratory committee should be formed? It was decided that Josh Young would reach out to Monte and see if the two should work together on this.
4. BEDC should develop a targeted marketing strategy to get new business into town. Tistrya Houghtling noted that none of us have a professional marketing degree and maybe we should hire someone to do this. She looked into how much this might cost and was quoted about \$30,000, an amount the Town cannot afford. Bob Gilson suggested that his wife, Rae Gilson, might be a person to speak to about this. Steve Abramson said that he would work with Rae and perhaps they could also work on welcome packets and develop a targeted marketing strategy. September is the deadline to get this underway.

A discussion ensued on what type of marketing we would want and to what types of businesses. Should it be limited to three types of businesses here – should it fill spaces, be home offices, or should they fill a “Clean Food Corridor.”

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Infrastructure – Peg Munves said they are trying to figure out the best way to talk to people – to start up the conversation. Josh Young will be looking at the two big malls. Hope to have this completed in the next 2-3 weeks. Will the lack of infrastructure limit the type or amount of housing we can build here.

Peg Munves reminded people to test their wells periodically.

2. Food issues – Josh Young is thinking about the ARPA money, but the subcommittee does not, at present, have any specific task they are working on

3. Outreach & Marketing – The Tourism map is in draft form – we will share it – should have it done by the end of May. Still need to talk about distribution – should we hire a professional distribution company, which may charge a lot. Would like to try to do it in-house first.

Erminia Rasmussen said we have to make sure it will be ok with local people to display it – can we tap into our budget and try the professional route on a small scale and see what happens.

Josh Young said he’s about to put posters around and will take some brochures with him. We all knew that if you don’t use the professional company, you can’t use their rack.

Food Access Mailer – will be going out with the May Town newsletter – has 7 organizations which participated in it.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

The CAC has produced a flyer with other towns targeting people with large properties and suggesting ways to develop them – these will be given out to real estate agents in the area. Discusses what you can do on your property, how to preserve and conserve the land around you.

Meeting adjourned: 7:36 – motion made by Tistrya Houghtling and seconded by Erminia Rasmussen.

Next meeting: May 2, 2022 – time and location TBD

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Powers